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Yours truly
D. Frank Peffley

Verses

By

D. FRANK PEFFLEY

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Miss Sadie Peffley

Associated with the News, and to whom this work is Affectionately Dedicated.

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD.

This little collection of verses has been gathered into book form for two purposes: first, that my work, or such of it as I have thought worthy of preservation, might be saved; and second, that I might give it a permanent and convenient body for private distribution among the few but valued personal and literary friends who have in the past shown a kindly interest in and appreciation of my literary efforts in both metric and prose composition. The publication is purely a labor of love and not a commercial venture. It is not for me to reach the popular eye and ear, and therefore a literary career could not be mine, had I the opportunity or the ambition to attempt it. I have written only as the muse insisted on being given voice, so the few offerings herein presented are gleaned from the meager products of many years of a life in which the constantly-demanded labor of the hand has handicapped intellectual effort.

The work is placed before the friends referred to as a memento of one they have known as an obscure but sincere lover of the beautiful in Nature, Art and Character; and to some who have not known me in the hope that they may find in it something at least of true poesy and welcome it as a contribution not entirely unworthy to be included in a library of western literature.

THE AUTHOR.

Creston, Washington, June 1, 1908.

THE WESTWARD LAND.

The sun beams fair on the Westward Land
Where the waters roll to the Placid Sea,
Where the glister of gold 's in the rivers' sand
And the mountains rear in their majesty:

Where the bold peak, wrapped in its hood of snow,
Like a crystal gleams 'gainst the summer's blue.
While its pure springs leap to the vales below
O'er rocks up-rent when the earth was new.

A gladsome way in the West we tread:
'T is a wide, brave land with a wild, free air
That comes from the frost of the mountain's head,
From its play where the Time-carved crags stand bare.

But it warms on the plains where the grain-fields lie,
And in green-clad vales where the fruit-globes glow.
'Neath th' eternal arch of the brooding sky
The wind-touched harp of the pines throbs low.

Muse of the Sunset, wake and sing
The lays that are writ in your ancient scroll:
On joyous pinions rise and wing
Where God doth call to the poet-soul.

SONNET.

Thou river Time that, never pausing, slow
Dost silent sweep and sweeping bear with thee
Into the shoreless ocean Destiny
A helpless throng, on-drifting with thy flow
From childhood's narrow vales where roses blow,
By arbored banks where fragrant buds of truth
Perfume the air inhaled by ardent youth;
Through plains where fruits of manhood ripened glow;
Where age's barren, burning deserts lie
Reflecting all its heat against the sun
That downward creeps across the paling sky
Whose gold to lead will turn and day be done—
Thou river Time! With awe I look on thee
And know that with the throng thou bearest me.

WHERE BLOSSOMS BLISS.

Does earth no sun-kissed height embrace,
No valley sweet with fruit and flower,
Where grief doth never seam the face
Nor ever comes the evil hour?

May not the searching mind of man
Yet find the zephyr's hidden home
Whence waft the angel-breaths that fan
When day grows faint the heav'nly dome?

No more since primal Eden's gate
Was closed shall man walk near to God
With hand in His, but must he wait
The opening of the gates of sod?

Then shall our life be one with His—
Thus whispers Hope that bears us up—
And found the land where blossoms bliss
Our lips shall part from sorrow's cup.

CAN SOUL INACTIVE BE CONTENT?

Time's flood rolls on. Each glad new year
Brings me yet nearer to the shore
That rises dim on some far sphere
Where faith is sight, Hope lures no more.

But is it rest with folded hands
And idle mind awaits me there?
Or shall I feel the same demands
TO DO that make this world so fair?

The joys we know of work are born:
Can soul inactive be content?
I pray when dawns my mystic morn
Be it to sweet employment.

The West! The West!
I love it best—
The broad, free West with its wealth untold—
For Nature's home is its mountains old.
Its dawns 'neath curtains of rose unfold,
Its sunsets linger in purple and gold,
While the dome of day
Is azure alway,
And the diamonds that stud the crown of Night
On spires of granite throw quivering light
That gleams and glints thro' the cold, thin air,
Illuming the stillness eternal there.

Here man is little and God is great,
And His work is wrought while ages wait.
He hath reserved to the last the best—
The broad, the free, the golden West.

NIGHT.

The sun is set and the fields dim lie
In the tender gloom of the ended day.
The after-glow in the west dies away
'Gainst the darkening wall of the lowered sky.

Gladly the wings of the morn unfold
O'er the hills of the far-off east we see
And the dew-gems tremble on grass and tree,
While the light spreads broad like a scroll unrolled.

And gladly we toil thro' the golden hours
While the flaming chariot above us speeds
At the heels of the fire-god's furious steeds
Whose hoof-prints are the scented flowers.

But the night is sweet with dreams and rest—
Dreams of the things the heart has planned,
Rest for the wearied mind and hand—
Till morrow awake us with new strength blest.

THE NATURE-WORSHIPPER.

I love the cold, eternal peaks
    On whose bald summits Silence keeps
Her court; the avalanche that breaks
    In thunder down their pathless steeps.

Beyond man's ruthless hands they lie:
    He can not mar the God-formed face
Of Nature resting 'gainst the sky,
    Nor can profane her holy place.

I love old ocean's freedom grand,
    Who sweeps with regal scepter round
The outmost verge of every land,
    And marks of man's domain the bound.

He can not break with reckless lust
    Of gold or glory Neptune's sway:
His eager feet are backward thrust
    Where tide and sand together play.

I love the lake that, broadly spread,
    Rests like a trembling, limpid screen
Between a wide world overhead
    And one below, but partly seen.

Beneath that screen I seem to see
A strifeless realm, a perfect peace:
A home where sweetest rest shall be
For mortals when comes soul's release.

I love the cloud whose evening fire
In beauty burns unknown to art;
Or flaming with the storm-king's ire
Is of his dreadest power a part.

For in the lightning's blinding glare
I wild, unmastered forces see:
The war of gods of earth and air,
Or sport of demons, 't is to me.

What human hand may tame and bind
In slavery to its weak control
No more sublime is to my mind,
Nor claims the homage of my soul.

LIFE'S RENEWING.

Now April's pulse begins to be
Felt in earth and air.
In awakening plant and tree
The perennial mystery
Of the season 's seen again
Spreading over field and plain
Round me everywhere.

Orchard's captive and wild plum free
In pink and white are gay.
Among the dead brown stems I see
The timid violet shrink from me:
A sweetly modest beauty she,
Most fit the spring-day's bride to be—
The sunclad spring-time day.

This clump of willows gray and green
With slender hands is striving
To hide some treasure. Ah, the sheen
Of purling waters lies between
The yielding twigs. A liquid treble
From ripple-lip and tongue of pebble
Sings the hymn reviving.

A SUMMER'S DAY THOUGHT.

The grass-waves roll like the waves of the sea
'Neath the feet of the wind on the meadows.
The lithe vine sways with the bending tree,
And the sunlight plays with the shadows.

To the hurrying breeze the grain-fields bow
As it hastes with its kiss to dry
The sweat from the sturdy farm-boy's brow
While he toils under cloudless sky.

O'er clovers red the brown bees hum,
Intent on their winter's store.
Up the sparkling pool the minnows come
In the shade of its mossy shore.

A day to lie on the sward and dream
Is this—ay, to dream of when
The world shone fair 'neath a roseate beam:
For the morning of life was then.

What visions of hope, of conquests bold!
What turreted castles there
Miraged in the mists did our eyes behold!
Ah, those beautiful walls of air!

"Spring is with us again," we say,
And mellower grows the lengthened day.
The playful waters as they run,
Released from snows by April's sun,
Make merrier music where they break
Upon the marge of stream and lake.
The hoarseness of stern Winter's voice
That through the tree-tops bare and dead
A dirge o'er shrouded Nature sang,
His peal triumphant loud that rang
From frost-bells swung from mountain-head,
Are gone, and hill and vale rejoice
With airs that on the softest cheek
Are lightly felt. The green buds speak
A language low the rambler hears
Through Psyche's sympathetic ears.
Now all things own the Passion's sway.
The sunshine woos the flowers, and they
Woo bee and humming-bird and maid.
The swain upturns the yielding earth
And feels within his breast a birth
As of the plants that burst the glade.
He knows not what nor whence nor how,
But that there moves beside his plow
An unseen Presence. It has laid
A warm hand on his heart, and goes
At night with him to his repose

To round his couch spread dreams so fair
That heaven seems nearer when the air
Of dawn with fragrance greets again
His rested strength.

A glad refrain
Sings through his mystic depths of soul,
Tuned with the wondrous chords that roll
The anthem of the spheres along,
The grand Creation's morning song
Whose octave sweeps from Law to Love:
Whose volume fills the dome above,
The depths below; from side to side
The echoless caves of utmost Space
Are a-tremble as waves of harmony race,
An ebbing, rising, but ceaseless tide
Whose flow begins with the spring and swells
Till its height is reached in the red-rose bells
When June, the delight of circling time,
Rings from her bowers the star-born chime.

Blest is the season of love and of hope,
When the impulse of life is awaked in all:
When the buds 'neath the sod arouse and ope,
And in the vine on the sun-kissed wall,
As the ivy springs in the maiden's heart
To cling to the oak in the heart of the swain,
Clothe strength with beauty, and each a part
Of one be ever through sun and rain.

BEYOND THE HORIZON.

I saw the moon, like a silvern bark
Sail slowly over the starry sea—
Glide down the west till the mountains dark
It passed, and they hid it away from me.

But I knew it was sailing on and on.
I knew that earth's rock-sinewed hands
Had not grasped it, and my bark was gone
To glide and gleam over unseen lands.

As the pale orb seeks the horizon's shade,
So man goes down o'er the hills of time:
On their farther side is his spirit stayed,
Or wings away over lands sublime?

WINTER.

Cold winds, and fields all dead—
Nor tree with promise blows
Nor fragrance breathes from rose:
Far south the birds have fled.

But 't is not death we see—
Life only lies at rest:
God's plan is ever best,
Whate'er that plan may be.

EASTER.

Easter! Feast of the goddess Spring
Forth from her white tent come to bring
Life to the woods and fields again
With smiling sun and gentle rain.
Across the blue of the lifted sky
She floats the fleecy clouds on high.
She stoops o'er the bed of each shy wild flower
And it wakes to the touch of her magic power,
Bursting the bars of its frost-locked cell
In the meadow's bosom or lonely dell.
She calls to the birds, "Come back with me
To your nesting again in hedge and tree:
Make glad the world with the lightsome glee
Of twitter and song. Come back with me."
Oh, Nature renascent in God's own love,
With earth's hands clasped in heaven's above!

But a dearer thought is theirs today
Who see the great stone rolled away
From the tomb of old; the Savior risen
From its dread embrace; the gloomy prison
Of the grave o'ercome, and life proved more
Than a lonely walk on time's bleak shore.
Day of the resurrection, give
A lasting joy to them who live
In sweet repose through the Christian's faith
That the Lord arising vanquished Death.

THE PASSING OF OCTOBER.

Now is the time of frost and falling leaves.
The breath of Autumn chills the circling blood.
The Year feels age's tremor and he grieves
To see the beauty fade from field and wood.

He gave them life and richly clothed them all
With leaf and blade and flower, with fruit and grain.
He gave them song and carol sweet to call
To pensive minds the sylvan joys again.

The mandate of the ice-god they obey,
But not fore'er: a new Year will arise
And with it come the lengthened, softened day,
The wakened voice and leaf 'neath high-hung skies.

MOTHER-LOVE.

There 's nothing in heaven above
Nor in the earth below
So precious as mother-love.
But often we do not know
Till the selfish strife
Of the field of life
Has painfully taught us so.

DAWN.

In the calm, silent night, by fair Luna's pale light,
The dew decks with jewels the red rose's spray,
And they shine there at morn when the day-god's first-born,
Aurora the beautiful, comes forth to play.

How balm fills the air, and its perfumes how rare!
How sing the glad chorists deep hid in the grove!
Oh, now it is sweet to sit down at the feet
Of Nature and learn from her lessons of love.

SUMMER NIGHT.

The moon in argent splendor riding high,
The stars with gentle fulgence all aglow,
The hills in outline dim against the sky,
The waters sleeping in the vales below;
Song-birds nestled under sheltering spray
Of elm or maple, waiting for the day
To wake each throat to melody again;
The hush of rest o'er all that God hath made
Save man, alone who knoweth care and pain—
His image on whom of all his hand is laid—
And beasts of prey that best the darkness love:
All these I note while wand'ring in the grove,
In meditation climbing to sublimest height.
Oh, time for sweetest thought—a summer night!

AUTUMN.

A hush is o'er the woodland now
    Whence happy-throated trill
Of bird-song shook from leafy bough
    Where summer crowned the hill.

The yellow leaves fall gently down
    Upon the withered grass.
The landscape dulls to somber brown.
    South-driven wildfowl pass.

A leaden light creeps o'er the blue.
    No more the sunset glows
'Gainst high-heaped clouds of royal hue.
    The dawn-light greyer grows.

The feet of Winter stealing on
    With cold and ruthless tread,
Press earth's fair breast. Her children gone,
    She mourns where lie her dead.

And yet he bringeth joys his own.
    Not all unkind his reign.
And he must lay the scepter down
    When Spring is queen again.

THE OLD TIME.

Sometimes I 'd call the old time back,
    Yet not to live it o'er again.
Too rough has been life's flint-strewn track;
    For these torn feet too keen the pain.

But there were those I loved when we
    Together walked in years agone.
They laid them down to rest; but me
    Relentless Fate whips slowly on.

One moment to look in those eyes,
    One clasp of mine in those warm hands,
One ringing word of glad surprise
    To greet me in the old-time lands,

Were bliss. But no— 't will not return,
    Nor would I live the dead years o'er.
Their ashes rest in Memory's urn
    Who walked with me the paths of yore.

MY HOME THAT 'S BUT IN SONG.

I am walking in my dreams the paths of childhood,
Where the sands beneath the moon are gleaming white
By a stream that stealing swiftly thro' the wildwood
To the Wabash rolls its waves of rippling light.
Ever white beneath the moon the sands are gleaming
Where her silver face is on the valley beaming,
And I fondly hold the hand of Mem'ry, dreaming
While so far from thee I roam,
Childhood's early long-lost home,
Of thy care-free olden days and sweet rest.

In those vanished years of yore, with life before me,
Ere the heavy hand of sorrow pressed my heart,
I was gladsome as the wild birds winging o'er me
Where the waters cleft the walls of green apart.
Still the stream is to the Wabash swiftly gliding
With the dancing light its laughing ripples riding:
Ever farther from thee Fate my feet is guiding,
While for thy return I long,
Oh my home that 's but in song,
With thy care-free olden days of sweet rest.

THE MUSIC OF THE HEART.

I have heard, the world far banished,
When wide-famed singers stood
Where cultured list'ners crowded
And stirred them as a wood
Sways to summer's breeze or storm's exultant mood.

I have sat, a thrall of rapture,
When the grand piano's chords
Threw back to master-fingers
Music far outspeaking words—
Brooks' clear babble, thunder's roll, the singing of the birds.

But the tones that sweetest ever
On my ear-of-heart have pealed
Float in childhood's untaught laughter
Borne from sun-kissed wood or field—
Music not of art nor written, throbbing life in joy revealed.

SERENADE.

Come to me, sweetheart, the moon is inviting
Our feet to the pathway the dark pines between,
Where shadowy fingers in her own light are writing
A message of love to the night's silent queen.

Come to me, sweetheart. The west-wind is saying
To pines and to moon what I 'd whisper to thee—
Whisper so low where the wood-elves are playing:
Come from thy window and wander with me.

Oh, trust me: my love is not as the loving
Of winds that but woo for a kiss and away,
Onward forever in wantonness roving,
For thou hast my heart in thy keeping for aye.

STEER FAR OUT,

Full oft along the shore
Rock fights with furious wave
And shuddering headland wails,
While far out safely sails
A good ship breasting brave
The storm's wild wrath and roar.

Then steer thy course far out.
Oh sailor on life's sea,
Beyond the rocks, nor doubt
There thou wilt safer be.

THE DAY OF DOUBT.

There comes to every human life a day
When, resting from the strife for worldly gains,
The mind thrusts things of baser kind away
And mounts on spirit-wings to higher planes.

In light not for the eye of flesh it sweeps
Far over works that feeble hands have wrought,
E'en to the vaults wherein Creation keeps
Of old His secrets locked from mortal thought.

It feels how little of the power is man's
That dwells in all the boundless universe of space;
How slight his grasp of Heaven's simplest plans;
How slight his skill their mystic lines to trace.

Returned into the finite sphere, it then
Confronts the mocking myrmidons of Donbt,
And, overcoming, Faith lends light again:
Or overcome, is damned to gloom without.

KNIGHT AND LADY.

'Neath a battled wall with mosses grown,
'Neath a casement barred in its towered height,
A champing steed bears an armored knight.
The gleam of his steel in the breaking light
Is the sheen of the wings of the risen sun,

A white hand waves from the cold, grey stone
As a lily bends when the south-wind seeks
To kiss the dew from its waxen cheeks,
And warm lips answer the love he speaks—
The horseman who rides in the dawn alone.

"I go. Farewell till the war is done,
God's service in the name of Spain
Calls me afar o'er the rolling main.
With a kingdom won will I come again
To claim my queen, my loved and own.

"With silken sails, in the glow of gold
When Phoebus burns on the western sea,
Soft winds shall waft my ship for thee:
At the casement watch and wait for me."
His fair form fades from the castle old.

The slow years drag o'er the cold, grey stone,
Yet comes not he, the steel-clad knight—
Chivalric soul and arm of might.
At wake of morn, in paling light,
She whispers, "When his kingdom 's won."

The beauty of the lily's gone—
Time's dust doth sully purest snow.
But lips grown cold still murmur low
Her warrior's words of long ago:
"Wait—Silken sails—Soft winds waft on."

'T is evening, and the passing day
In splendor streams o'er sea and land.
Above the ledge a withered hand
Waves fitfully, a reed that 's fanned
By breezes dying as they play.

A glad, mad shriek—his name she calls.
"He comes! My Knight—my King!" she cries.
"Where on the wave the sun low lies
His purple sails swell 'gainst the skies—"
Oh Death, thy Queen before thee falls!

IN SHAME AND GRIEF.

(On the death of President McKinley.)

Again Columbia's head is lowly bowed.
In shame and grief before the world she stands—
In shame that foulest murder laughs aloud
And taunts her helplessness with crimsoned hands.

In grief that he should fall, her noble son
Whose faith and love went out to all his kind—
Whose wealth of honors all humanely won
Could wake no envious Cain in human mind.

That brute may yet in God-like image move
'Mong men and do the work that hell commands,
This treacherous stroke doth once more dearly prove
In deed that thrills with horror all the lands.

For pagan souls with Christian feel the shock
That, following round the earth th' electric wave,
Makes faith in man a lightning-shattered rock
As stunned we stand beside our chieftain's grave.

TOTTY BROWN AND DOTTY GREEN.

Totty Brown and Dotty Green,
Their lawns without a fence between,
Where tall elms and maples throw
Upon the smooth-shorn carpet low
A checkered, shifting come-and-go
Of light and shadow, to and fro
Moving as the branches sway
To the whimsic breezes, play
Together all the summer day.

Totty is two years the older.
Dotty's crown is at his shoulder
When they 're standing side by side;
And I see him glance with pride
O'er her straw of ample brim
When she is in front of him.
He is stalwart, tanned of face;
She a form of supple grace,
Lissome as a brook-side willow
Bending over mimic billow.
With a spirit never quiet
Mirth in him runs ceaseless riot;
Yet from Joy's full chalice drinking
He sometimes turns to graver thinking.
She's a maid of serious mind,

A baby-woman sweet and kind,
And demurely sits the while
Watching him with frown or smile
Till he, wearied with his playing,
Throws him at her side, and laying
His tangled curls upon her knees,
Looks upward through the spreading trees,
And asks, "Do you think God can see
As little things as you an' me
When He's so far off in the sky?
I can't see Him, He 's up so high."
And Dotty answers solemnly,
"W'y Totty B'own! Course He can see
Us bofe, an' littler sings 'an we.
I know it 'cause my mamma say
He never, never looks away,
But watches all 'at children do."
No doubt is in the eyes so blue
That earnestly are looking down
Into his restless orbs of brown.
Ah, faith and trust are woman given
With life that man must ask of heaven.

But silently fly childhood's days,
And with them vanish childish ways.
Again I see them on the lawn,

But not as in the days agone.
'T is summer's dusk. From tree and wall
Day's fading banners softly fall.
She rests upon a rustic seat,
He on the green sward at her feet.
His eyes upraised hers falling meet,
And lover's words his lips repeat:
"Dora, knowing what 't would say,
Give answer to my heart. Alway
It has been yours alone, and now
Would know the joy of plighted vow."
With glow of rose upon her cheek,
"Why need I, Tom, in words to speak?"
She asks, "For you must long have known
That love with Dotty's life has grown.
Or in your breast still lingers doubt,
As long ago?" "It is cast out
By these dear lips, and perfect trust
Its place shall hold forever. Just
To God and you, whom He has given
The light for which my soul has striven,
I promise from this hour to be,
For He through you 's revealed to me.
No earth-born passion can with bliss
So pure fill mortal heart as this
Of love that finds its own." They rise

And stroll beneath the dim-lit skies
While Vesper and leaf in whispers hold
Rehearsal of the story old.

I look upon them as they move,
    And feel my own youth throb again.
"God grant," I pray, "The years may prove
    Love's golden bond a welded chain."

LOVE NOT IN VAIN.

Ah, my airy
Winsome fairy,
Why do you thus around me
Weave your subtle chain?
Soon, my charmer, you'll have bound me
Ne'er to loose again.

Why beguiling
With your smiling
All my heart away from me,
Do you taunting stay
From these arms that wait for thee?
Tell me, tempting Fay.

Do not mock me,
Do not mock me—
Sprite of moonlight, fly away.
Tempt me not again:
Let me love a child of Day
And love not in vain.

SUNNYEYES.

Busy little Sunnyeyes—
Eyes as blue as summer skies
And as bright as summer suns—
O'er the gay-robed meadow runs
After flitting butterflies.
Not a thought of passing hours,
Lost among the laughing flowers.
Chasing still with gleeful cries,
Has my darling; nor she knows
As the day-tide broader flows
She is weary till I call
Her where restful shadows fall.

Soon within my arms she sleeps,
But in sleeping laughs and leaps,
And I know she's still in dreaming
In pursuit of tinted wings:
Pretty, fragile, fleeting things
That are only fair in seeming,
And that caught are crushed in taking,
Into dusty fragments breaking.

Like are I and Sunnyeyes:
Both are chasing butterflies
Over life's wide meadow lands.
Torn and bleeding are our hands

With thistle's blade and rose's thorn.
Neither knows how weary we
In our vain pursuits may be
Till we hear the "Come to me"
Once to every mortal borne
From our Father, and we fall
In his loving arms asleep,
There to rest for aye and all.
When at last in slumber deep
So lie I, like Sunnyeyes
Shall I dream of butterflies?

WHERE LIETH ITALY.

When on life's pathway sorrows rise
Like mountains lifting to the skies;
When Hope eludes the mist-dimmed eyes,
And vanishes the promised prize,
Remember then Italia lies
Beyond the Alps.

If ye would see her templed hills,
Her vine-clad slopes and silv'ry rills,
Where ancient glory dwelt that fills
Th' imagination yet and thrills
The quickened pulses, bear the ills
And cross the Alps.

MEXICAN GIRL'S LAMENT.

Heart of mine, oh heart of mine,
Long in thy darkened cell repine!
Thy love lies low in the cruel grave.
In vain, in vain, in vain you plead
At Death's closed door—he will not heed.
Where was the power of God to save
Thy love, my heart, from the cruel grave?
Oh heart of mine!

Love of mine, oh love of mine,
All heaven's years my heart is thine!
Thy face is hid 'neath the senseless stone.
Oh heart so brave and form so fair,
'T was murder's hand that laid thee there—
God did not call thee, yet thou'rt gone:
Thy face is hid 'neath the senseless stone,
Oh love of mine!

TWO SONGS—WAR AND LOVE.

I wrote a song of brave men's deeds—
A song of death on the reeking plain
Where red War stalks o'er the shot-rent slain
And the gaunt wood-wolf with the vulture feeds.
I wrote of the cannon's stunning crash,
Of the crackling musket's line-long flash,
Of shells that scream through the nitrous pall,
Of the circling sabre's fiery fall.
And the song I wrote brought the flush again
To the cheek of the tottering veteran,
A flame to the eye of the age-bent man,
And nerved anew the palsing hand
That had drawn the blade for native land
As his mind flew swift from Now till Then.

I wrote again a tenderer song—
A song of a mother's life-devotion,
A wife's sweet trust, the soundless ocean
Of a maid's pure faith who walks along
The shining paths of the Time Untried
In the light of Hope by her Chosen's side,
Where fruited trees screen the sun's mild heat
And the bloom of the rose is beneath her feet.
And the love-song softened the snows that lay
On shrunken temples until their flow
To the moistened eye brought the long-gone glow,
And the heaving breast caught the pearl that fell
From the trembling brim of the old heart's well
As the soul looked back on the far-away.

Of the words that I wrote, what be the test
If of Glory or Love the song was best?

RETROSPECTION.

When the shades of night are round me and the toilsome
day is done,
I have posted life's worn ledger to the setting of the sun,
Then I sometimes wander backward on the pathway of the
years
Till the valley of my childhood in its beauty reappears.

There amid the scenes I ramble where to me all earth was
glad,
Looking fondly on a landscape in its vernal vestments clad.
There I see the streams like silver dash above their clear-
seen beds,
And the flowers that love their music bend their gay but
fragile heads.

I see the nimble minnow flash along the crystal wave;
I see the crawfish hiding in his mimic pebble cave;
From the elm I hear the trilling of the song-bird's wild
delight,
And the chatter of the squirrel swinging in the leafy height.

It is morning, and the breathing of the goddess of the east
Shakes the pearls of dew and sunlight o'er the wild bee's
scented feast.
Laughing children, my companions in the years of long ago,
Come again—familiar faces, radiant in ther dawny glow.

Loud I call them in my dreaming, but in vain await reply:
E'en the echo of my message melts unheard into the sky.
I would join them in their gambols—but they vanish into air,
And where now I saw lost Eden, close-reaped harvest fields lie bare.

Here where lay the paths of pleasure, stone-marked mounds upheave the sod,
Each mute witness that a playmate heard the whispered call of God.
For, awakened, I am walking the uneven way of age,
And, returning to the present, bend above my ledger's page.

There is joy in retrospection, in thus wand'ring back to youth,
When the path of life's been traveled holding fast the hand of truth:
Doing with the heart and conscience e'er approving what is done,
Let the years glide uncomplaining until age and youth be one.

The azure paled and turned to gold;
The gold to purple. Fold on fold
The mist-wove draperies swung in air
As Evening gently hung them where
In her brief splendor summer's day
Upon the mountains dying lay.
I sat and watched the changing scene
Reflected in the quivering sheen
The lake spread wide, by elf-breaths stirred,
Or vibrant wood-note faintly heard
From restful dimness of the grove
Beyond, till light no longer strove.

Gone were gold and purple. Crept
The shadows out. The dusk sky wept.
The clouds rolled back beyond the brow
The mountain lifted, frowning now.
The wood-note faltered, then was still.
    The lake's broad shimmer sank from sight,
And water, grove and plain and hill
    Were blended in the hue of night.
The stars came forth, and softly fell
    Their silvery rain on sea and land.
In spirit freed by Nature's spell,
    I felt the Unseen clasp my hand.

Said Contemplation, Come with me:
Sail we o'er th' ethereal sea.
Sail we where bright rivers flow
On other planets, lit by glow
Of other suns. Where other years
Mark the flight of time. In spheres
Where the changeful life of man
Is guided by another plan;
Or wherein life is yet unknown,
But Chaos rules supreme and lone.
In others yet where sullen Death
The scepter wields—Time's work is done,
All animate has yielded breath,
And Desolation from the throne
Of the dead realm of Silence sees
The out-work of his stern decrees.

So speaking, touched my dew-damp brow
With thought-light fingers. Then the prow
Of her mystic craft she turned away
From earth and with the speed of day
As it darts from its source, afar we whirled
Round star and moon and world on world
Till Intellect reeled in effort vain
To comprehend in the vision shown
The bounds of Force's vast domain
Whose sway all Space alike must own.

And I woke. I heard the lake's low plash.
I saw the fire-fly's lantern flash.
The beetle hummed in the soothing air.
The cricket chirped in the wall. And where
Earth met the East pale Luna's beam
Softened the gloom with her tender gleam.

I said, Here have been problems given
At my home's door too deep for me.
With such has Mind for ages striven,
And still unwrit the answers be.
The light and darkness both I see
The sun's flame screened by hill and tree.
I hear the soft-tongued waters sing
Where rhythmic ripples shoreward spring,
Or list to drone of wings that beat
The drowsing hours; while at my feet
Frail insects fill the night with sound,
Though voiceless. In the shadows round
Leap sparks of intermittent fire
Phosphoric, burning without heat.
A thousand strings Creation's lyre
Hath, all attuned to concord sweet.
And yet it is not mine to be
A chord in this grand harmony
Of Being. From me lies concealed
The Hand whose touch thro' them's revealed,

But not explained. I only know
How short the way may Science go
Along the paths of earth and sky
In quest of lamp to read them by.
Myself's an unsolved query. Yet
Whence and Whither remain unmet,
And What but vaguely understood.

Then Reason spake in pensive mood:
What profits it to seek the source
Of Nature's all-impelling Force
That thro' unerring Law compels
Obedience from each form that's born
To life, or in dead silence dwells
Inert, of sense and motion shorn?
Come, take my hand and walk with me
Unvexed with taunts of Mystery,
But be content to live and die
Unasked the question How or Why.

FAITH'S CHILLING.

High in the shapely tower it swung,
The great sonorous bell, and flung
From off its iron lips and tongue
Full, vibrant and exultant tones.
I paused upon the pavement stones
Below and listened. O'er my soul
In thrilling ripples seemed to roll
A summons from the bending sky,
Whose far, blue depths outreached the eye
That springtime morn, to worship's seat.
With bended head and rev'rent feet
I passed the arched door and stood
    Without the sanctuary, where
I listened to the swelling flood
    The organ poured upon the air
Of harmony; majestic, grand
As that which waked the shepherd band
It seemed 't must be.

I entered and
An usher beckoned with his hand.
I followed up the noiseless aisle
The soothing flood swept down the while;
And when the pew door closed I sank
Into the cushioned seat and drank
From founts that sprang in Heaven's hills,

I thought, and felt the Power that fills
The walls of space and enters in
Each human heart that seeks its sin
To lose and God's sweet grace to win.
The choir burst forth. Each voice that sang
Was faultless, and the anthem rang
Upon my tense and intent ear
Distinct and beautiful and clear.
But cold—how cold! Those voices told
No story in their perfect tone
Of God's abiding, as of old,
In hearts that sang to him alone.
"They mock for money," then I said
In sorrow, and I bowed my head;
"They sing their praises all to men
For man's reward."

My eyes again
I raised to meet the pastor's face
Standing in his sacred place,
Slight and full of youth and fair,
To offer up the opening prayer.
The seminary's training shone
Through phrase and accent, gesture, pose;
My heart sank slowly as a stone
In ocean's depths as the prayer uprose.
"He prays to men, for man's applause,"
I cried within me.

And when came
The sermon, in it God's great name
Nor Christ's was emphasized, but passed
As if they were the least and last
To be considered in man's life.
It dwelt on things of earth—the strife
Of parties—measures—men; the gains
Of art and science; all with pains
Sought out, and told with flowing tongue.
His hearers on his accents hung,
For eloquence was there that fell
Upon the hushed house like a spell,
While his elaborated theme
Made man the greater God to seem.
But Calvary's scene of death he spared;
"Him crucified" he would not paint,
As preachers of the old time dared
In burning words, heart-spoken, quaint.

The organ loosed again its flood
As cheerless on the tiles I stood
Without the sanctuary's door
And saw the ebbing tide outpour
Of worshippers; but not a face
That looked in mine gave out a beam
Caught in that house of added grace.
To me it did not sacred seem

When on the pavement stones again
I stood and gazed upon the pile,
A triumph of the hands of men,
And mused on what I'd seen the while
I sat within, and wondered not
That God by man's so oft forgot.

THE WIND'S WORK.

The wind blows wild, the wind blows free.
It wafts grand ships o'er the broad, blue sea
With the wealth of lands that lie afar.
It drives the storm-fiends roaring car.
It drinks the dew where daisies grow,
It lifts the mists from the meadows low,
Thro' the vines of the cottage window creeps
And fans the face of the babe that sleeps,
Or the couch of the suff'rer softly seeks
And soothes the heat from the fevered cheeks.
The wind blows wild. the wind blows free,
And it works as it will on land and sea.

LIFE'S CYCLES.

Under the trees two children play;
Laughing boy and girl are they,
He with eyes of night's deep hue,
Hers of the cloudless sky's own blue.
Careless they romp on the velvet grass
While the scented days of springtime pass.

'T is the roses' month. Two figures stray
Where the moon-cast shadows silent play.
A fair young head on a shoulder leans—
Luna of old know'th what it means.
Slowly is paced the path that lies
Where the elms in ancient grandeur rise.

Under the trees two children play
Merrily speeding the long, bright day.
Boy and girl with eyes whose hue
Finds its fount in a mother's of rarest blue,
And by her side a bronzed man stands,
Stroking her brow with toil-hard hands.

Again beneath the elms at play
Two children laugh in the autumn day.
Light of eye is the girl I see,
But his is dark as the crow's wings be.
Watching now two mothers stand
Clasping each a man's strong hand.

Rocking at ease on the porch the while
Two aged ones look on and smile.
Through glasses gleam night's faded hue
And the paling light of the heaven's blue
As they see themselves in the babes and stray
Far back o'er memory's long pathway.

Thus Life repeats as Time flits by
The same sweet things. Tho' we age and die,
We live again in our babes and theirs,
Our joys renewed, forgot our cares.
We grow old; yet the world is young
Alway as when the star-hymn rung.

YOUTH, AGE, HAPPINESS.

A maiden sat by a young man's side.
He held her hand, and her brown eyes fell
On the grass at their feet, but his with pride
Looked into her face, for he loved her well.

'T was the evening time of a summer's day,
And the soft air came from the golden west
With a sweet, cool breath, and it paused to play
With the thick, dark tresses the youth caressed.

Happy was he that summer's eve,
For she to his wooing had answered "yes"—
Had promised the whole wide world to leave
And trust in him for her happiness.

They looked down the vista of coming time
And builded them castles of gilded air.
Their ears were touched with a faint, far chime
As they walked together in Love's Land fair.

Three score years have come and gone,
And again they sit in the fading day.
Again the west wind wandering on
Toys with the tresses thin and grey.

They've lived through the vista, the time is flown.
Their shining castles all melted from sight.
Yet they look still ahead where the golden sun
Gilds the Heavenly spires with a lasting light.

But he loves her still and she loves him
The same as when life in both was new.
Though their clasped hands tremble, their eyes be dim,
Their hearts with the old love beat strong and true.

Ah, happy indeed are those happy in age,
Whose closing life's volume brings no regret
To gnaw at the heart, but shows a fair page
O'erwrit with good deeds, earth's duties well met.

A-WING.

Sweet and free of wing to me
The muses sometimes come, and we
Speed swift away to realms afar
To roam in blest ethereal fields
That lie beyond the evening star,
Whose flora richest perfume yields.

There viewless flowers in unseen bowers
Breathe fragrance all th' unmeasured hours;
For time no cycles there doth run,
But an eternal golden light
Falls trembling from one central sun
That moveless rests at zenith height.

Doth there not lie beneath the sky
Some land like this to which I fly
In moments when the spirit sinks
O'erwhelmed by stroke of cruel fate?
Wherein the generous soul ne'er drinks
The cup prepared of mortal hate?

Unknown to me such land may be—
Some islet girt by peaceful sea
Where Fortune's hands with treasures gleam
That he who labors may obtain;
Where life may be a poet's dream,
A dream that wakes not into pain.

Ah, Hope, fair one who still dost run
And beckon me to follow on,
    How far I've followed you, foot-sore!
        How far must follow yet ere you
    Unbar and ope the rosy door
        That shuts your promised state from view.

Again a state whereon doth wait
Fair Truth with Justice for her mate:
    Where good is of more worth than gold,
        Ambition is not to destroy—
    Where Friendship every hand doth hold,
        And mind and heart find sweet employ.

LOVE'S READING.

Mignonette,
Dear Mignonette,
Lift to mine your eyes of jet.
Let me read the secret deep
Locked behind your lips you keep—
Let me read it, Mignonette,
Written in your eyes of jet.

Mignonette,
Oh Mignonette,
Will you keep it from me yet?
Raise those lashes from your cheek.
Let to mine your dark eyes speak—
Speak and tell me, Mignonette,
With your eyes of burning jet.

Mignonette,
My Mignonette,
Now your eyes and mine have met,
Light from out their depths has spoken,
They the seal of lips have broken
And you love me, Mignonette,
Says your heart from depths of jet.

Psyche, come and soar with me
Where wild winds wing so wide and free—
Sweetly wild
They fly,
Or mad or mild,
Across the sky:
Come, my Soul, and soar with me.

We'll rise to the realms of upper air
Whence Earth looks dim and far and fair,
And the pale
Rare blue
Mists' clear thin veil
Enchants the view—
Come, rise with me in the upper air.

'Neath moon and glinting star and sun
We'll race those tireless pinions on—
Care's dull flight
Outdone,
We'll live in light
The glad heart's own,
Away 'neath moon and star and sun.

THE VOICE OF MARS.

Country calls, country calls
Me away.
War's wing flaps upon our walls,
O'er the land its shadow falls
And the timid heart appalls
With its play.

Trumpets bravely, blithely blare
By the sea,
Bidding us to gather there,
Nerving us to do and dare,
Following our banner wher-
E'er it be.

I had hoped that ne'er again
Mars should say:
Tramping thousands, shake the plain;
Sulph'rous voices, fright the main—
Blood Columbia's arms must stain,
Death have sway.

But he 's spoken, we 've replied,
Cast the die.
God and justice be our guide!
Patriot soul by steel is tried.
As our fathers won or died
So must I.

TOAST—THE DAY WE CELEBRATE.

Unroll thy scroll, oh History,
    Unroll it and the day
We celebrate restore to me.
Let my imagination see
Those heroes as they throng the Hall
And hear each patriotic wall
In ringing echoes words repeat
That throw the gauntlet at the feet
Of haughty Britain's stubborn king:
The day when Freedom's weary wing
From soaring without place of rest
For thousand years turned to the West,
And sweeping Atalanta's main
With gladness found repose again—
Thy scroll unroll, oh History,
    Restore to me that day.

I breathe its air, oh Mystery
    That brings them back to me:
Brings form and feeling, voice and deed,
The steel-nerved courage that doth heed
No peril that the future shakes
With threat'ning hand, but bravely breaks
The bond Oppression overstrains.
Above the clank of severed chains

Thrown down I hear the Bell ring out.
The welkin trembles with the shout
That up from plain and mountain floats
Responsive from three million throats.
'T is war! 'T is war! 'T is war! 'T is war!
Proclaimed and answered near and far.
That day I live, thro' mystery
    Of mind restored to me.

Thy story 's writ, oh glowing Past,
    On Time's unfading page—
How long in blood the suns arose,
How Glory's halo crowned the close
When Victory proudly gave her hand
And with it Man a Chosen Land.
Those heroes are but formless dust:
Their souls live on as live the just.
Their memories and their works are given
To us a sacred trust. May Heaven
Defend us while we them defend
And Freedom's empire still extend.
Then fill the cup. Drink to the Day,
And Patriot Hearts long turned to Clay;
To Bell that told in clangorous glee
The birth of strife-nursed Liberty.
Fill deep the bowl—with joy we'll drain
To yonder Silken Folds again—
To stars eternal, torn from night

When struggling legions sought for light;
To sky's high emblem of the true;
To white, that speaks of pure intent;
To crimson, life's blood for us spent.
Pledge to The Flag our love anew.
May we its story, like the Past,
Write on a fadeless page.

THE REMORSE OF ARNOLD.

The bargain made,
The price was paid.
For rank and gold
My soul was sold—
In exchange ruinous was given
For hell my dearest hope of heaven.

Keener than steel's
My conscience feels
The thrusts that through
Me pierce anew—
Swifter than the lead that tore
My body in the days before.

My glazing eye
Now moistened by
No cooling tear—
No soothing tear—
Slow closes on a sunless sky:
Unwept, unweeping must I die.

IN NATIONAL CEMETERY—FT. SCOTT, KANSAS.

The holy hush of dewy eve descends.
Softly fades the glow from out the west.
Moistened breezes gently fan my cheek,
And lay caressing touch upon my brow,
In rev'rence bared within these sacred bounds.
The silence of the place a voice assumes
More eloquent than ever dwelt in words,
Or than my pen may frame to signs of sound.
The guardian maples whisper 'bove my head
As if a watchful spirit moved amid
Their greenness, jealous of a living presence here
Where Honor's dead the soil forever claim.

I stand upon the sward that wraps their rest,
These sleepers dreamless of the strife that 's done,
Whose flesh and bone have unto dust returned,
But who in deeds that can not perish live.
My mortal senses fail before the flood
That from dead years rolls on my passive mind.
Time whirls me back. A wondering boy again,
I see and hear the scenes and sounds of war.
The silence is no more, nor death's repose,
But storm of action that the timid heart
With dread o'erwhelms, but sternly nerves the brave
To steadied beat and strong, around me breaks.
The cannon's heavy boom, the musket's crash,

The shriek of shell and whirr of hurtling lead,
The saber's parrying ring, the trampling hoof
And clattering wheel of battery's advance,
The neigh of steed with deeply-rowelled flank,
The Stentor-toned command above the fray,
The curse that hurls from yielding foeman's lip,
The cheer of conqu'ror pressing victory home,
And groan of fallen, for heaven's mercy breathed—
The tempest of the past, by mystic power
Imagination wields o'er souls that free
Their wings of grosser weights and fly with her
Where nothing that hath ever being had
Can cease to be, sweeps by renewed in all
The fury and the glory of its time.

Eternal stars, that saw the birth of man
And all that he hath wrought of wrong or right,
Unmoved and cold look down.
Again I am within the living hour,
And at my feet the modest stones extend
In pallid ranks, to careless ears so mute,
Yet speaking unto mine as never tongue
Hath spoke, my emotions full awake.

Shall these memorial blocks, these lipless orators,
In vain admonish us who yearly strew
With flowers this sod to hold forever fast
The heritage for which their blood was dearly paid?

TO THE AMERICAN EAGLE.

Thou bird of broad, unwearied wing, soar on,
Soar on, oh Eagle bold for liberty!
When Freedom's hope from king-curst lands was gone,
Thy pinions fanned her barque across the sea.

O'er rock-walled Appalachia thou didst lead
Our fathers on where valleys woke to peace;
O'er waiting plain and river still didst speed,
And mountains stored of old with weaith's increase.

High in thy wake arose the voice of song
That Toil-triumphant rolled to heav'n again.
A dawn-born babe e'er noon-tide brave and strong
With thee looked out upon the western main.

With beak of steel agleam with fiery wrath
And iron talons fierce in righteous cause,
Tore thou the human curse on Progress' path—
The monster dark that shamed Columbia's laws.

The islands of the Carib long forgot,
Antilles' Eden into inferno turned
By proud Iberian masters, knowing not
The quality of mercy, a beacon burned

To call thee down a wrong of Man to right:
And stunning was the swiftness of the stroke
That like a Jove-hurled bolt's resistless might
The century-rusted chains of bondage broke.

Nor hast thou paused above its peaceful sands
And listless seen the vast Pacific lie
Between thine own and sun-lit, sea-girt lands
Where millions long oppressed for rescue cry.

Give thou them freedom 'neath thy victor-wing.
Yield not thy conquest to the lords of greed.
Plant there the seeds whence peace and knowledge spring,
And every fruit that serves the age's need.

Oh bird of heaven, forever be thou thus
Defender bold of human life and right,
And lead thou us—ay, ever lead thou us—
Still onward, upward, toward the perfect light.

A BALLAD OF THE FLEETS.

It is midnight at Manila and the ghostly mists hang still
Over water, over island, over fort and in-shore hill.
All is quiet with the dreamy, drowsy silence of the East:
Save the sentry's measured pacing every sound of life has ceased.

But the low waves murmur softly as they roll upon the strand.
Are they whispering a secret to their playmate, to the sand?
And the far-off stars are trembling in the overbending height:
Do they signal down the danger floating under them tonight?

On the Spanish fleet the gunners, resting in the arms of Fate,
The coming of her hour of doom unconsciously await
While behind Night's fading curtain the feet of Dawn draw nigh,
Walking silent over hilltops far where meet the land and sky.

But the walls of steel and darkness hide no sleep-closed foeman's eye
Where with War's hand at the helm, Death with poised dart standing by,
Safe within the harbor creep they ere the watchman is aware
'Neath the lower fallen drapery of the May-morn hanging there.

"Armas! A las armas!" cries the sentry pointing to
The grey-dark monsters looming the grey-white vapors through.
"Arms! To arms!" as nearer still the armored menace floats,
And Cavite's loud challenge roars from flaming iron throats.

The fleets impatient wait the sun on this historic day,
Mars' ancient game, men's lives for pawns, in lust of blood to play.
And when the ev'ning comes again, o'erswept by frightened waves
Lie shell-torn hulls that coffin men low-laid in oozy graves.

Withhold not honor from the slain. Died they as warriors die,
The men of Spain who now at rest 'neath lost Manila lie.
Thank we the God of Battles that to ours the vict'ry fell.
Ah! Did the God of Justice breathe this day the flames of hell?

Over the wire
Speeds on wings of fire
From sea to sea, from gulf to lake, the wild alarm of war,
And busy mart and teeming field and mountains wild afa
To trump and drum awake.

Rebellion now
Takes being, and his brow
Defiant rears where Charleston's palms look on her sunn
bay,
Quaking 'neath the thunders of the battery's fiery play,
And Sumter's flag is furled.

But patriot eyes
Uplifted, 'gainst the skies
Behold above the battle's cloud the banner Glory gave
Over sacred dust ancestral with unsullied folds to wave,
And smouldering fires reglow.

With brave reply
To prostrate Union's cry,
To rescue come her legions strong in proud young man-
hood's might,
With fathers', mothers', lovers' prayers sent forth in cau
of Right—
As ocean's tides they come.

They face a foe
Of valorous blood, and know
Long years the crimsoned tented field ere Error writhes in dust,
Peace spreads her wings beneath One Flag, the sword is red with rust,
And broken ranks return.

For those that sleep,
Let a grateful country keep
Vigil sacred and unending where the ashes of the dead,
Whose sacrifice was for all time, in reverence are laid
To wait the morn eterne.

Let flowers rest
In fragrance on each breast—
Sweet blossoms wreathed and gently strewn by children's spotless hands—
While years revolve and with each Spring in Summer's doorway stands:
They offered flowers of life.

BE A MAN.

If you can not be a hero,
Lead a nation's arms to glory,
Write your name in letter's gory
'Mong the great in song and story,
You may be a Man.

If you can not be a monarch,
Holding in a mighty hand
The scepter o'er a mighty land,
Erect and proud you still may stand—
You may be a Man.

If you can not be a painter,
May not limn the uncreate,
Pigment, canvas insensate
Change to life's immortal state,
You may be a Man.

If you can not be a poet,
Sing to all the world for ages
Deathless verse as Homer's pages
That must live while passion rages,
You may be a Man.

And in truth there's nothing greater
Than the noblest work of God,
An honest sovereign of the sod
Unwhipt of vice's scathing rod—
A clean-souled common man.

In the dim and misty dawning of the morning of the race,
The sun of Conscious-Intellect, with burning lance of light,
Far eastward, cycles struggling, found at last a rifted space
In the swirling clouds of Chaos to attack the hosts of Night;

To attack the formless demons who would screen the mind of man
From the over-mind of God that through Nature's changeless laws
Working in the lapsing ages, working to pre-ordered plan,
Shall bring to all one concept of creation's Primal Cause;

To place within the grasp of Man Himself the spear and shield
Of thought and judgment and enlist his hand against the foe;
For long must rage the battle ere the stubborn band will yield,
And Error's wrecks must strew the tide of time in onward flow.

He must war with superstition, passion, ignorance, and call
His mind to claim its heritage of deathlessness and power—
To claim its freedom from the flesh, no more to be in thrall
To an earthly form and substance that shall perish as a flower.

Ay, long the strife has been, relentless, opened once to never cease.
Intellect with each repulsing gaining deeper, broader strength,
Reenforced for each assault and offering never terms of peace,
Won a base for final conquest of a waiting world at length.

To lonely shepherds watching, through Chaldea's crystal air
Faintly heard, the clash of armor with its wakening challenge came
From the mystic fires of heaven, glowing fixed eternal there,
And Science first on earth had found a being, place and name.

Still the slender shaft is flying that the gentle shepherds hurled
In that far, forgotten era when the conflict thus begun
Nothing in itself could foretell of the progress of the world
As the trembling star of midnight gives no hint of rising sun.

Falls to us the ancient warfare. We must face the hosts of Night
Standing grim before the forces of our thought and will and heart.
Ours to move in phalanx forward, ours to press the ceaseless fight.
Ours to widen fieids now conquered acting each a worthy part.

SLUG SIX.

The foreman moved with a softened tread
O'er the black and littered floor,
And his grizzled head bent lower
While an added stoop his shoulder wore.
With a tear in his eye and a heart-born sigh
He whispered, "Slug Six is dead."

"Poor old Slug Six!" The printers knew
How the foreman felt that day—
That his friend had gone away
Where the souls of good men rest for aye
In the radiance bright of the land of light,
The home of the tried and true.

"Slug Six and I were boys as yet,"
(He was stern with living men,
But his tones were woman's then,)
"When we came to the office together, and when
We earned our cases and took our places
And life's first takes we set.

"He wooed my sister, and his I won.
We were wedded the self-same time,
And our hearts heard the same love-chime
As the years sped on to manhood's prime.
And our little ones played in the same cool shade
Or romped in the same glad sun.

"Our friendship bound as a golden chain
Us two in this selfish sphere
Where oft we pay so dear
For a friendship only from lip to ear;
For each knew the other clung nearer than brother
When trouble came close in his train.

"Old Slug Six was a workman, too.
His case was always clean
No dirty proof was seen
Ever passed to his slug, though his light be mean:
His column's edge straight as the path trod by Fate,
Every line of it justified true.

"There lie on his case his rule and sticks,
His tools in a life-work long—
A life that now seems a song
Of toil with patience, with naught that was wrong.
As silver they're bright in the dim, dusty light,
Like the record of dead Slug Six.

"Let his pipe and his glasses lie on the sill,
And his apron hang still on its nail.
You remember how trembling and pale
His hand, like the death-barque's quivering sail,
When he hung it there last and unmurmuring passed
From his work to his home on the hill.

"Drape the hand-press, boys, with crape for its friend:
Put a knot on the lever
He pulled, for it never
Will feel such a hand as his was forever.
And all that was his leave just as it is
Till we see in the graveyard the end.

"God rest him, my comrade and brother! And when
'Time' is called in my ear
May I quit with good cheer,
And hand in my string at the Desk without fear.
May my proofs be all done, galleys ready to run,
As were his, is my prayer. Amen."

A SPRING SONG.

Merrily O, Merrily O,
Across the bare fields spring chases the snow.
Clothed with the sunshine she gaily trips forth,
And winter, abashed, steals away to the north.
In her foot-prints the violets raise their blue eyes
And peep from their beds at the deep, liquid skies.
The birds in the trees are rocked by the breeze,
The breath of her laughter as on she flies after
The tyrant whose ice-beard still melts as he flees.

The blackbird is singing his "tee, le le ling."
The robin is bathing his beak in the spring
Where the light dimples play as the stream on its way
Passing under the willows smiles back at the day.
There is love 'mong the songsters, each seeking his mat
And a place for her nest in the hedge by the gate.
There is cawing of crows and crowing of cocks,
And bleating of lambs as they race with the flocks.
Without and within is the unending din
Of the farm when its labors in earnest begin.

There is love 'mong the swains when at eve from the plow
Each Ike finds his 'Bekah in the midst of her cows.
With her milk-pail a-brimming, her true heart a-
swimming
In its own sea of purity, ling'ring she'll stand

By the creaking lot gate with her shapely white hand
On its latch and deny him the way to the well,
While her blooming round cheek and her dancing black
eye
Weave a net round his heart never woven by art
Whose meshes will hold till life's fountain runs dry.
Oh love, what thy charm and how potent thy spell!

With banter and laugh, the low bar bending over,
Like a bee when it seeks the sweet lips of the clover
Whose nectar it kisses away with the dew,
So quick to her lips ere his meaning she guesses
The o'er-tempted plowman his own boldly presses—
Blame not the brave youth, for to nature he's true.
Loud laugh the rude rustics, while mantled in blushes
Like a lakelet when sunset streams red through its rushes
Away to the dairy she like a fairy
Of the old German forest, who tripped where the glades
Were lit by the moon whose light not more airy
Was than the dancers who trooped from the shades,
Flies with her heart more tenderly beating,
Thrilled and subdued with young love's blissful greeting.

LOVE'S QUESTION AND ANSWER.

Give me promise, tell me true—
    When years have flown and youth is gone,
    And I no more am fair,
Oh, will for me thy love live on—
Will yet thy love for me live on
    When I no more am fair?
Give me promise, tell me true.

I thee promise, doubt not me—
    When with years slow thy youth shall go
    Thou'lt be to me as now—
My heart's love still for thee shall glow,
Its altar fire as brightly glow—
    Thou'lt be to me as now,
I thee promise, doubt not me.

FINIS.

And art thou, Death, but Sleep—
Rest pulseless, silent, deep,
Undreaming while the years
Roll on? With doubts and fears
The living still contend
And tears with laughter blend
For them, but not the dead?
When life's frail cables part,
Stilled is the bounding heart,
Nor eye responds to light,
Then say we "It is night
Eternal." But could we
What lies beyond this see,
Mayhap we'd say: " 'T is morn:
Who lies here is but born
In disembodiment."
Then might we be content
That we so swiftly run
This mortal course, begun
We know not how nor where
Nor why—and should we care?
Why strive with mysteries
That must fore'er be His
Despite what mind may do
To pierce the dark veil through?

THE NEW YEAR.

Adown the icy steep another year is gone—
Down to where the gulf of Hath-been yawns
To swallow all the years of earth, Time's children.
Pinched was his face and haggard, and his eye
Was fireless, blinded with the snow.
His locks whipt white in the ruthless air.
His body, robeless, frail and shrunk with age,
Unsteady limbs and broken staff upbore
With trembling remnant of departing strength.
A hollow moan his voice. No more
With gladsome speech and song he cheered
The sons of toil with promise fair
Of toil's reward. His work was done.
He brought them opportunity. He gave
Them time to sow, to cultivate, the golden moons
Of harvest, and passed on not looking back,
But leaving them with will or strong or weak to do.
How well they used these gifts was not his care,
Or if they were despised he did not heed,
For each must answer to and for himself
How much he's done or failed to do of what he could
Since spring, his first gift, blooming fell
From his warm hand.

The year is type of life.
Man has his time to sow, to till, to reap.

'T is his to will what he shall garner when
The time of harvest comes, as come it must.
Ah, with what report shall I respond,
And each of us, when hath life's Master called
For an accounting? At the end can we
With courage say, "I wrought the best I knew?"

The year that 's born today resolve to live
So well that whether Fortune smile or frown
On worldly strivings that must each engage,
Sweet Conscience upon our hearts may pour
A soothing balm and spare us all remorse.

HEROD'S FEAST.

Within an Eastern prison's noisome cell,
Dank and dark and narrow, guarded lay
The Last-sent Prophet, Christ's forerunner, bound.
No wrong was his. No law of God or man
By him was violate. But speaking bold
Against illicit love of him in whom
Was vested Roman power in Galilee
Had drawn upon his head the cruel hate
Of woman, more relentless e'er than man
When in her heart revenge doth cry for blood.

Again the year brought round the festal day
On which was Herod wont to celebrate
His birth, and in his palace halls at night
A gathered host of guests at table sat.
And jest and story, song and laughter, rang
Around the board and echoed from the walls.
Red shone the wine as brimming cups were drained,
And with its fire to warm the full-fed veins
Still louder waxed the mirth on thickening tongues
Till jest and song and boasting tale grew flat.
Then spake a favored one at Herod's right,
"Oh King, hast not a damsel thou whose grace
"Can wing the hours ere they begin to creep?"
Then joined they all, "A dance! A dance, Oh King."

And Herod sent a message to his wife
Commanding that into his presence come
Her daughter, versed in subtle arts to please—
A girl whose beauty well might captivate
E'en sober brains and hearts that sought no more
Than woman's perfect form and passion's eye
And movement wrought with oriental grace.

Admired of all, within the tempered light
She paused, her lips apart in timid smile,
And dark, full orbs aglow with unfanned fire;
With pearls and gold bedecked, and wealth of hair
Revealing, hiding, marking stronger still,
Each charm of neck and arm and billowing breast;
With robes that threw in well-designed relief
The beauty-lines that most appeal to men
In sensuous mood or heated with the cup.
Then silence while she danced or comment under breath,
And loud acclaim of praise when she had done,
With Herod's words most generous of all.

With the exertion flushed and childish pride,
She stood before him, called. With reckless tongue,
"Most graceful thou," he said, "and worthy of
"Our favor to the full. Ask what thou wilt
"To equal power with us. It shall be thine.
"These guests do hear—thy dearest wish prefer."

A child she was, and still obedient to
Her mother; and until she knew her will
She would not speak, but straightway sought her side.
The proud Herodias, nursing fire of hate,
Resolved that he this festal night should die
Who had offended not the law but her.
So to the child she said, "Of Herod ask
"That unto you he bring the head of him
"In bonds and prison lying now for me.
"He knoweth whom, nor dare he to refuse
"What he hath sworn before all men to do."
When at his feet again she stood, she spake
According to the words her mother gave.

Then laughter failed within the palace walls.
O'er Herod's face a pallor came. A groan
Escaped his lips, for fear had come between
His hand and John, whose innocence he knew,
And whom the people held as sent of God.
But could he now before his guests abjure
His oath and live by them unworthy deemed of Rome?
His word was out: he must be Herod still.
He called a captain to him from the guard
And trembling whispered in his ear the word.

Two in the dungeon stand with lamp and sword.
The Prophet sees the blade without a trace

Of fear upon his strong and rugged face,
And asks "What would ye, men, with me this night?"
They answer him, "Thy head would Herod have
"To grace the feast which he doth celebrate.
"Tax not his patience with our long delay,
"Lest we likewise 'neath his displeasure fall."
"A sword's swift stroke 'tween God's own face and me,
"His servant, all unworthy Him to serve!
"My life is Herod's, but my spirit His
"To whom it flies—strike quickly as thou wilt."
He kneels. A flash within the narrow walls
Like summer lightning's play. A torrent red.
A form that sinks and shudders, then is still.
A gasp and closing eyes—and opening Heaven.

The feast is past—the banquet hall is dark.
Herodias dreams of wrathful conquest won,
While Herod sleepless walks and asks with dread,
"What if from out the tomb he come again?"

REVELATION—A TALE OF CHRISTMAS.

Two homes stood beside a worn highway
Where the feet of the dead and the living
Had trod the red soil into atoms,
And the winds and the rains had removed them.
Their doorways stood facing each other,
And their windows looked down on the trav'lers
Who constantly eastward or westward
Fared in unending procession,
The old faces gradually going
And leaving their places to new ones.
On the one hand the glow of the wood-fire
Was ruddy and cheerful as childhood
As it shone through the old-fashioned casements,
Illuming the face of the passer
Who glanced as he hurried on homeward
At the happiness it was a part of.
Within there dwelt three generations:
The grand-parents on whose thin temples
The snows of their seventy winters—
Snows the warmth of this world cannot soften—
Lay white as on Andean summits,
Sat on opposite sides of the hearth-stone.
He smoked in contentment the clay pipe
Which his grand-daughter filled and presented
With a kiss and a stroke of his forehead.
She busied her fingers with knitting

Or smiled at the frolicsome children
Who played round her soft-cushioned rocker,
Oft pausing to ask the old questions
She had answered their parents before them
About Santa Claus and his reindeer,
And how he gets down through the fireplace
Without scorching the fur of his clothing.
Careless were both; for the future
Was bright with the bow of the promise,
And the past had been prosp'rous and happy.
The brows of the parents were thoughtful,
But grateful hearts shone through their faces;
For ne'er had the death-angel call'd them
To sorrow, or ill-fortune fallen,
But always the Good Lord had blest them
Whatever their hands had engaged in.
And now, when life's summer was ending,
They rested amid what they'd gathered,
Living only for those they had brought from
The mystic Eterne to the Present.

But over the way there were dreary,
Dark windows, with Want looking through them.
Misfortune had long time abode there.
The father had labored while waiting,
For the shadow he saw surely settling
To deepen and shut the world from him.

It had fallen, and flowers had blossomed
One summer above him. Her sorrows
Had broken the poor mother's spirit,
And her frail body's strength was fast waning;
For her eldest had died ere his father,
Whose hope he had been for the future,
A staff they would have still to lean on
When he should be gone from among them.
Yet she toiled as always a mother
Will toil till the grave opens for her
That the little ones left to her keeping
Might feel not poverty's presence.
But in vain. And the chill winds of winter
Swept round them and laughed in the windows,
And mocked when the door was thrown open
At the want and the sorrow within it.
The eyes of the children grew hollow;
From their lips fled the music of laughter;
They stood at the windows and wondered
At what their young minds saw so darkly—
Why the width of the time-worn old highway
Should to them be the gulf that shut Dives
From the Beggar in Abraham's bosom.

'T was the eve that the chorus of angels
Sang "Good Will" over star-lighted hilltops.
All day the children had noted

The stir and the glad preparation
For the feast and the joy of the morrow,
The surprises the young ones should wake to
In the home with the sun-lighted portal.
But the darkness grew thicker and chiller
And the fatherless babes at the window
Cried with the cold and the hunger
That the mother could give no relief from.
Grief burst from the wan suff'rer's bosom,
And the children turned from their watching,
Kissed her with arms round her shoulders,
Each whispering "Mamma, I love you,"
And asking her why she was weeping.
She pressed them close to heart then
And said "Because mamma loves you."
They held her pale face in their thin hands,
Wiped the tears from her cheeks and her lashes,
Kissed her again and the sadness
Faded out of their lives. For the moment
Forgot were the cold and the hunger
In the heart-glow of love, and the music
Of the little ones' innocent prattle
Drove the lank wolf from the threshold.

But the lights o'er way flaring brighter
And a faintly-heard shout floating on them,
They begged that they might cross the roadway

And stand in the broad wedge of whiteness
That opened the dark wall of shadow
Night builded so strongly between them
To see what the meaning of Christmas.
She could not deny them their asking,
For naught other had she to offer.
So wrapping them in their scant garments
She took in her arms the two babies
And silently crossed to the casement,
Stealing joy for hearts of her children.
The beams from within soon betrayed them
To the quick eye of one of the household
Who called to the others and pointed
To where like a flash three white faces
Turned to the darkness and vanished.
With the flash to the father and mother
Came the shock of a swift revelation
That smote to their heart-depths as lightning,
Unsealing their fountains of feeling.
With tears gushing over her eyelids,
"Oh Savior!" she cried, "How we blindly
"See thee not while thy name we do honor!
"How little on this thy dear birth-night
"Do our hearts feel the love thou didst give us."
"Come, wife," said the father arising,
And they hurried out where in the glooming
The three were seen staggering homeward

With sobs from the little ones breaking
As they clung in their fright to their mother.
A gleam from the hallway upon them
Fell full as the door was flung open.
The mother sank down as she saw them
Approaching in haste to o'ertake her.
"Forgive us," she prayed, "but 't was heaven
"To these my poor babes for one moment
"To look on the scenes at your hearth-side.
"I know it was wrong and ask pardon;
"For I shall be gone ere the Christ-night
"Again this drear world shall curtain.
"But these, my innocent children,
"Too young yet to know—not to suffer—"

Before she could conquer her feeling
She was borne in strong arms to the fireside
And placed in the mother's soft rocker.
The babies, wide-eyed in their wonder,
Were carried away to the wardrobe
And clothed in the warmest of garments
From those of the household's own youngest.
Soon for the three was a feast spread
Such as the little ones never
Had sat to; the mother in long time.
And when with the food more of color
Had mantled their cheeks, and brighter

The lights in their eyes had arisen,
A chapter was read and the father
Poured fervently forth to the Giver
The thanks from their hearts overflowing
For the lesson the night had thus taught them.
Nor would they suffer the widow
And babes to return to their dwelling
So cheerless and bare for the winter,
But gave them a home sweet with comfort.

So passed the snow and the spring came:
Came to the children as happy
And playful as lambs in the meadows.
But with it the mother grew weaker,
And when from the brook-side in May-time
They brought to her fragrant wild blossoms
She kissed the brown hands that had plucked them,
Whispered "Farewell" and a blessing,
And her spirit went out from its prison.

They buried her where she had wished them,
By the side of her son and her husband,
And carved on a shaft of pale marble
The names of the three silent sleepers.
Soon was forgotten the sorrow
The little ones felt in her going,
And her memory was but the fragrance

That a flower will leave when it 's withered
In the book 'tween whose pages we pressed it.
With the years they learned more of their childhood
And the home they had left o'er the roadway,
The story of that night at the window,
And the lesson it bore and the blessing.
Then as womanhood's fullness came to them
They sought to repay all with loving
And serving God's poor as He taught them
Whose birth had the chorus celestial
Announced in the glad song of "Good Will."

DREAM-WINGED.

Once when the dewy-pinioned summer night
Hovered o'er me, weary with the toil
That earth doth daily claim of hand and brain,
And 'neath the soothing coolness I had sunk
Into the silent depths of restful sleep,
Beside my couch a beauteous Dream did stand—
A Dream more fair than mortal tongue or pen
Can to the mind describe, or limner's skill
With form and color to the eye reveal.
Its face of pallid light, ethereal, pure,
Upon me smiled in solemn happiness,
And such compassion beamed as never shone
From other face below but only His.
No word its lips did ope; but bending low
Within its own my passive hand it clasped
And to its pulseless bosom gently pressed.
No movement felt or saw I then, but knew
Earth's darkling mass far lost in misty space,
And dimmest stars as seen from her now sprung
To blazing suns, and spheres through ether whirled
Sang to my ear the primal hymn of heaven.

And now I found my Dream and me beside
A stream with surface calmer than the face
Of healthful childhood borne in Slumber's arms.
No ripple marred it rolled by breeze that breathed

From either shore. The waters lay as clear
As floor of crystal 'neath the eye that saw
Yet could not pierce the moveless, mystic deep.
Above it hung a cloud as white as floats
When June across her bluest height unfolds
Her fleeciest banner to her softest air,
That hid the farther shore with brightness dense.
"Brother, this is death," my vision spoke
And in her own took both my willing hands.
But to me came not fear nor dread, but peace
In body never mine to know. My soul
Would see beyond; and with the wish there broke
A moment's rift before my eager sight.
Beyond the vail there walked a joyous band
Of beings such as she who bore me to
This shore where Time his loose-held claim resigns.
Within my call they seemed to move, with fields
Beneath their feet like those we fondly see
When Memory brings to Age sweet childhood's scenes—
Whose paths were gay with flowers and soft with moss
That cooled the tired feet. And farther ranged
The hills eternal, crowned with trees that rose
Above their summits robed in fadeless green
And vocal with wild music trilled by birds
As deathless as the day that lights their sphere.
The rift was closed; but joy ecstatic swept
Still o'er me, and I cried "If death be this,

"To cross a stormless tide and be with them
"Who dwell where death is not, I would
"That I might pass from what earth knows as life
"With all its fruits that into ashes turn."

A heart's beat from me sight was gone; and when
Again it came upon that farther strand
I stood with beings of my Dream-guide's form
About me. Songs of grove-choirs far and sweet,
Incense rising from the floral fires,
With perfumes borne from fragrant-foliaged heights,
O'ercame my untried spirit and I sank
Into the arms my Dream to me outheld.
A kiss she on my forehead pressed and with the kiss
A tear of pity and of tend'rest love let fall.
Revived, I heard the converse glad of those
Who spoke with her whose tear still damped my brow:
I heard the name of "Letha," and I knew
The baby-sister mine in childhood's years.
And with that name so long on earth unspoke,
Existent here but on the stone that marks
The spot where 'neath the little mound I saw
Her peaceful, snowy face forever hid,
Joy swept upon my heart so deep a flood
That life of earth awoke with all its burdens still.

LEGEND OF SPIRIT LAKE.

It is a legend weird and old
That still by Lac d' Esprit is told,
Whose bosom clear and deep and cold
Throws back the hue of northern skies
And cloud or bird that 'neath them flies—
So mirror-bright its surface lies.

In depths unpierced by mortal sight
With his lone love whose face of white
That glows like heaven's far lamps of night
Drives back the shadows to their cells,
Bold Star-of-Day, the Lost Chief dwells—
Lost Chief whose breast with vengeance swells.

His wrath the wild Dakotan fears,
And ne'er across the water steers
His rocking craft, lest his listening ears
Catch the paddle's plash, or his eyes perchance,
Its silvery flash in the sunbeam's glance,
Or the prow-rolled ripples that shine and dance.

For he rouses the dread storm-fiend who rends
The thongs of the tempest-wolves and sends
Them howling over the lake, and bends
The lightning's bow till its anger breaks
In crash and roar and the scared earth quakes,
The startled ooze in the dark deep shakes,

And the boatman sinks to the world below.
But watching there, their own they know;
And the water sleeps in its placid glow
When the face that floats above is white
Like the far, dim lamps of heaven at night
That drop down quivering threads of light.

———o———

Widely roamed the Dakotas
In the fair, crisp days of the autumn
When the prairies turned brown and the forests
Resplendent in gold and in crimson
Burned in the soft yellow sunshine
That blended the frost-painter's touches,
Seeking the haunts of the bison
And the deer that fed on the meadows.
Close by the Father of Waters
Curled upward the smoke from their tepees;
Or near to the margins of lakelets—
Footprints of the Great Spirit—
Shining from out the broad landscape.
There speared they the fish and the turtle;
There gathered they fruits from the thickets;
There dried they the flesh that the hunters
Brought from the long, weary chases
For their living when back to the village
The Northwind should drive them and Winter
Should lock up the storehouse of Nature.

Or far on the Mightier River
Whose waters are turbid and angry
As they roll with the thaws from the mountains
Swift to the gulf where the Southland
Bathes in the sunheated tide-waves,
Their brave men followed the warpath,
And the blood of their enemies stained it
Behind them where Death's shadow lingered.
Homeward they turned them rejoicing,
Flaunting the gore-knotted scalplocks,
Trophies of valor the old men
Looked on and boasted of bold deeds
Themselves had accomplished aforetime,
Ere Age, the patient old warrior,
Had stript them of strength and endurance
And bidden them stay with the women.

Young Star-of-Day was their war-chief.
Brown was his face as his fellows';
Matted and black were his long locks;
Keen was his eye as the eagle's.
Stronger his arm was than any
That followed him, and in the ambush
None was as he so successful;
While in the fury of battle
His stroke was the stroke of the lightning
Whose flash rives the heart of the oak tree.

In his veins coursed the blood of the white man.
He knew it not; for he never
Had known the fond mother who bore him,
The mother who long years had mourned him.
The squaw who had nourished his childhood
Had stolen him from the rude cradle
Where, crowing and catching at sunbeams,
He lay in the cabin at evening
Where the land of the pioneer paleface
Touched the domain of Dakota.
She named him from the star-whiteness
Of his face as it glowed in the twilight.
Kind had she been, and he loved her
And thought of her ever as mother.
He was loved of the tribes, and they trained him
In all the rude arts of the warrior,
That he should succeed Um-pa-sho-ta,
The Chief whom their old men had followed.

One eve as the band by a lake side
Stopped for rest from their marching,
There lay, wearied out with exertion
In following day-long her captors,
A maiden of radiant beauty
Weeping upon the coarse grasses.
White was her face as the starlight,
Golden her hair as the sunset,

Blue were her eyes as the heavens,
And she pleadingly looked at the Chieftain
In silence, imploring compassion.
She reached the bold heart with her prayer.
He pitied her sorrow and loved her.
He felt in his breast a new impulse
Unknown to the tribes of the prairie,
And knew he was not a Dakotan.

When the braves had sunk into slumber
Deep and undreaming around him,
He stole to the maiden who sleepless
Still sobbed as she lay on the grasses,
Lonely and frightened and trembling.
He loosened the thongs that had bound her,
And lifting her up in his strong arms
Bore her quickly out from among them,
And down where the waters complaining
Impatiently beat on the margin
In musical murmurs, though sullen.
There rested half drawn on the dry land
A boat. It was frail and unsteady,
But safety lay over the waters.
Escaped from the bands of Dakota,
They'd fly to the land of the white men;
For the new revelation within him
Had told him that their blood was his blood.

There would he love her he'd rescued.
Half across the expanse he had paddled
When the breath of the east wind grew stronger
And the wavelets, now tipped with the silver
The moon as she rose threw upon them,
Grew rough in their play, leaping over
The low-floating sides of the vessel.
It sank; and the Chief and the maiden
Went down to the world of the dead men.
Sinking he cursed the Dakotas.
In the caverns of Death he still hates them,
And none of the tribes dare offend him
By crossing the lake where they perished;
For the storms will obey him. Destruction
He sends o'er the face of the water.
And thus have the tribes of the northland
Been taught to shudder and whisper
When they speak of the lake and its story—
The death-haunted Lake of the Spirit.

IN PENSIVE MOOD.

When the pale moon's gentle beam
Falls on wood and hill and stream;
When the world at rest doth lie,
Death's silence rules below, on high;
Then music not for these dull ears
The earth-forsaking spirit hears—
Soul-chords waked by heavenly fingers'
Touching, and the soft throb lingers
Echoing through rapt Psyche's cells:
Rising, falling, sinks and swells
With the moods that mind control
While Time's unheeded tide doth roll.
Thus when Luna's gentle beam
Falls on wood and hill and stream.

Oft when the sun's last gleam of gold
Hath died and stars glow faint and cold
And from my life-task weary I
Walk pensive 'neath the lowered sky,
I set me free from form of earth
And feel the joy of that new birth
Wherein at last all things shall be
Made known—the doors of Mystery
Swung wide and every secret lie
Revealed before the perfect eye.

Communion full and sweet is here,
Life ecstatic, vision clear,
Care forgot in realm of bliss
With peace of heart unknown in this:
Thus from weariness I fly
And pensive walk beneath the sky
When the sun's last gleam of gold
Hath died and stars glow faint and cold.

FAIR WASHINGTON.

Oh Washington, fair Washington,
That liest toward the sinking sun,
Thy fields of grain all waving free,
Thy fruits that smile from bending tree,
Thy wealth of woodland, stream and sea—
These make thy people proud of thee.

And well they know, oh Washington,
Thy course of empire 's but begun.
Swift glide thy waters ocean waits,
Broad lie thy harbors' open gates
That look away where orient lands
Stretch out to thee their eager hands.

Oh Washington, thou Borderland,
Firm as thy name thy fame shall stand.
With brave hearts wrought thy pioneers,
And looked with Hope to future years:
And now to her full promise come
Content enjoy each toil-made home.

Thou wilt not fail them, Washington,
But with each cycle of the sun
Wilt bring to labor more and more
The riches of thy boundless store—
Unplanted vales with fruit shall glow,
Mines yield their treasures hidden low.

And thousands from the eastern main
And inland's wide-extending plain
Still follow where thy mountains rise
And beckon 'neath thy stormless skies
To where the waters foam and roar
On rivers' rocks or wave-beat shore.

Thou wilt bid welcome, Washington,
The tide that westward yet shall run,
And give to them who seek thy clime
Rewards for toil that come with time;
For never fails thy favored land.
To recompense the patient hand.

In Lighter Vein.

THE POLITICIAN'S PLAINT.

Heaven lies about us in our infancy, we're told.
Fond women call us handsome when we're uglier than sin.
But when we've grown to voters and fat offices would hold,
Oh, 't is then the world around us gets its fine work in.

MISUNDERSTOOD.

"I've something here," the lank man said,
"That will please your taste, I think."
But the editor did not raise his head,
For he busily slung the ink.

"A few nice pomes," the visitor quoth,
"With the freshness of fragrant trees"—
The editor muttered a fearful oath—
"Mellow as an evening breeze."

"We can't use po'ms," the editor saith.
On his broad brow deepened the scowl.
The lank one turned as pale as death,
For he heard the bulldog growl.

And he fled straightway. His basket fell
Right down by the editor's chair,
While the red-ripe apples rolled pell-mell
On the bare floor everywhere.

He came to Kansas when the state was young,
And he likewise was in the dew of youth.
Enthusiasm loosed and moved his tongue,
And he sang high of duty and of truth.

The years rolled on, and there ripened in him
A laudable ambition to arise
Above the petty things that sought to win him,
And write his name in gold upon the skies.

But hard the struggle was, and youth was flown,
Yet did his name not blaze among the stars.
Sorrow settled on his heart, a mighty stone,
And on his brow were disappointment's scars.

He sadly sighed, "A humbler name I'll make—
A name that shall be known upon the earth.
In life's great game I'll win a minor stake—
Not all in vain shall have been my birth."

The steak he won. He made the name more humble,
And now 's beyond life's promise or its menace.
Within the cemetery upon the name you'll stumble—
'T is on a wooden headboard and is "Denis."

A CHARITABLE THOUGHT.

If in the road perchance you see
Before you wending slow his way
A traveler whose pants may be
A relic of some by-gone day,
Don't get gay and speak a thing unkind:
Reflect that in the race of life he has come out behind.

IN THE FALL.

Now comes the frosty midnight,
And chilling breezes blow.
'Mong sere leaves in the moonlight
They sadly whisper low,
And the jovial muskeeter
In abbreviated meter
Sings a song so much the sweeter
That we know his play is o'er—
And we'll give him no encore.

THEORY AND PRACTICE.

Brains and modesty in man
Fair praise receive from all;
But when we call at Fortune's door
The hand-out goes to Gall.

ME GRAIVANCE.

Me neighbor Brown who lives nixt door
Is a moighty foine mon, oi must say.
He has a good house an' a grocery store,
An' 'is check it goes ony day
At the bank,
An' oi thank
Me luck whin it 's me thot he owes,
F'r it is shure oi am av me pay.

But it 's me thot is sorry he lives nixt door,
An' oi 'll tell yiz whoy it is true.
Oi 'm a paceful mon an' it makes me sore
To think the thots that oi do,
But, bedad,
Oi am mad
At the racket oi hear fr'm marn till noight,
Which the same is the coz av me roar.

He has a foine gyerl—her name it is Mae,
An' a purty name it is too.
He 's bot a pianny f'r her to play
An' she 's nothing ilse f'r to do.
So it 's thump,
Bing, bang, bump,
Loike the divil bating tanbark all day long.
Thot 's the razon f'r me wroth, as oi say.

FATE OF A KANSAS TERROR.

He was a western terror, and he thought to have some fun
By getting on a merry whizz and taking in the town.
Like a burnished copper steeple in a setting summer sun
Shone his nose upon the quiet streets he swaggered up and down.
But the citizens descried
Him and got on the inside,
And they left a margin wide
For this terror on a toot to bravely tread.

Yes, he swaggered up and down, he looked fierce and loudly swore,
"I 'm a roarer from the land of blood an' bones,
An' nary cuss I care for the riverlets of gore
That 'll wash the dust from off'n these here drouthy Kansas stones.
So come out if you dare,
An' I 'll promptly fill the air
With a cloud of frazzly hair,
An' I 'll turn your carcasses into payin' mines o' lead."

But the people all stayed in, and they barred the outside doors,
And peeped from out the weathershakes up in the attic loft,
Or fled to cyclone cellars like when the storm-wind roars,

Or the playful western zephyr does the superstructures waft.

So he strode the silent street
While the spurs upon his feet
His advance and his retreat
Told to the cringing inmates of the houses that he passed.

"I 'm a terror as I told you, an' I 'll eat you on my bread.
I 'll do your ticky village an' your curdled blood I 'll spill.
I 'll drink your fire-water till my nose is cherry red,
An' your sickly cemetery I 'll most assuredly fill.
But I did n't come to talk,
So crawl if you can 't walk,
An' toe this line o' chalk,
An' gaze upon the sinkin' sun, for it 'll be your last."

He ceased, and in the center of the wooden sidewalk drew
From one end of the block to about its middle plank
A line of ghastly white, and he would have drawn it through,
But his after life terrestial was made a sudden blank.
From the pocket at his hip
There waved the flashy tip
Of a red bandana, slip-
Ping further out as on his stooping way he went.

And just across the street, in a livery stable stall,
A billy-goat was feeding on loose hay from out a rack—
And men came out with hoes and scraped the terror off the wall
And put his pulpy remnants in a little paper sack.
Then without dissenting vote
They gave that billy-goat
A new twenty-dollar note
Which he munched a slowly back to the hay his steps he bent.

CHRISTMAS IN DARKTOWN.

Crismus comes, evah niggah knows,
But once a yeah, an' away hit goes.
Nen hab a good time while hit las'—
Dinah, move aroun' putty tolable fas'.
Possum good an' tatehs too,
Little roast pig an' chicken stew,
Tuhkey stuffed—oh, g' long away,
Yallah gal yaint nowhah today!

Gib me dat banjo, Sambo,
Sambo, gib me dat banjo.
I 'll play while Dinah spreads de clof—
Tum-tiddy-tiddy tum—step hit off!

Hiyi! Whoopee! See him dance
Twell 'e shake de buttons all off'n 'is pants!
Look dah now at Singlefoot Joe
Pattin' 'is wooden laig on de flooh—
Now 'e 's a dancin'—haw! haw! haw!
Jes beats all dis niggah evah saw—
Ef dah yaint Dinah ginnin' to swing,
An' she wuz a gran'ma way las' spring!
Lay down, banjo,
Lay jes so—
Doan mek fun o' me,
Wooden-laig Joe—
Right han' across an' suhkle roun',
Left han' back an' all rake down.
Rappy-tappy-pat-pat, scrape an' wheel—
Lawd know how to mek a niggah's heel.
All promenade an' to yoh seats,
An' I 'll say grace foh dese heah meats.

WHEN I WAS YOUNG.

Down on the banks o' Bresh crick I used to be a beau,
I 'm not a-go'n' to tell you how long it was ago,
But I 'm older now 'an I was then I 'm not ashamed to
say,
'N' I used to like a gal down there afore she went away—
When I was young.

She wuz Sally Ann McKibben, as purty as the morn.
I used to hear 'er singin' as I plowed the growin' corn
While she druv the cows to pastur comin' right along the fence,
An' I stood an' gawked an' grinned at 'er as if I had no sense—
Fer I was young.

One time she stopped to chat with me, so bashful stan'in' there.
She wore two roses on 'er cheeks an' two more in 'er hair.
With ruby lips an' pearly teeth an' eyes the hue o' jet—
A-leanin' on the ol' worm-fence I think I see 'er yet—
But I was young.

She smiled an' axed me "Don't you think it 's wrong to kiss a girl
When she tells you that you mus' n't?" an' throwed back a strayin' curl.
I flushed an' ans'ered "Course it is." She blushed an' laughed an' said
"That 's what I tol' that city chap"—that chap whose hair was red,
An' he wa'n't young.

I tol' 'er 'at I 'd wallop 'im an' shet up both 'is eyes.
I 'd turn that briery nose into a pug o' twiste the size,

I 'd climb 'is frame an' twist 'is limbs an' make 'im sport a crutch
When next 'e druv to Bresh crick; but I did n't do it—much.
I was too young.

I met 'im in the highway with Sally in 'is rig
An' I axed 'im to git out o' that, 'f 'e did n't feel too big.
'E ans'ered me "With pleasure," an' 'e hopped into the road
An' guv the lines to Sally, an' 'is hat and coat 'e throwed—
An' me so young.

'N 'en 'e got into the buggy an' on to church they went.
I watched 'em with my open eye as on the fence I leant,
But my clo'es they needed patchin' an' my nose it needed care,
An' as people would be passin' they wuz no bus'ness there
Fer one that young.

She stopped next day as uzhal where I wuz plowin' corn,
An' looked as sweet as ever; but she said I looked forlorn
'N' advised me to cheer up agin—I mus' n't lose my grip
I tried to grin, but could n't fer the plaster on my lip—
I did n't feel young.

I danced at Sally's weddin' when the hollerdays wuz
come,
An' in the shivareein' I beat the biggest drum,
But I ferguv 'er husban' for the trouncin' that I got,
An' I tell no lie in sayin' I have larned an awful lot
Sence I was young.

SORTER BIOGRAPHICAL.

He was born in Arkansaw,
In a sorter quiet spot,
And he always stayed about
Where at first he 'd sorter got
A norry glimpse of Mother Earth,
The flint hills of his place of birth.

He was a sorter lazy youth,
And he sorter pottered round
The farm, and with a shovel plow
In summer sorter vexed the ground,
And he raised a patch of corn,
Though it sorter looked forlorn.

With the years he sorter grew
To a cracker lank and tall,
Dressed in homespun yaller jeans.
But he sorter had no "sprawl,"
Or no git-up, as they say
In the state of Ioway.

He married, and then sorter lived
On bacon from the razor back,
Corn pone and punkin stew, and raised
Of ganglin' boys and gals no lack.
They tapered down from six feet high
To the sugar trough and lullaby.

As the years rolled slowly o'er
His head, his hair got sorter thin,
And he sorter shed his teeth,
And his leathery cheeks caved in.
Down Time's steep he 'gan to slide,
And at last he sorter died.

OLD GRIMES IS DEAD.

Old Grimes is dead, that jolly soul,
I ne'er shall him more.
He had not lived to be so old
If he had died before.

I knew him when a boy at school
He used to run and prance.
He wiped his nose upon his sleeve,
His sleeve upon his pants.

The teacher's seat it was a stool.
His coattails reached the floor.
Grimes nailed them down with carpet tacks,
Then slipped out through the door.

Professor Gads, I can't begin
To tell you half he said,
But he caught Grimesey halfway home
And Grimes, he went to bed.

He was an active, venturous lad.
He climbed the tallest trees,
He rode the colts and calves and cows
And pulled the stings from bees.

He fought with all the village boys.
    Ofttimes his eyes were black.
He 'd sometimes run away from home,
    But next day would come back.

He had four brothers and they five
    Slept in a trundlebed.
The others took the lower berth:
    He occupied the head.

When he was grown he lost his heart
    To winsome Jennie Mott.
But when he asked for Jennie's hand
    Her father's foot he got.

This hurt poor Grimes's feelings so
    He vowed he 'd never wed
'Less he could win a widow's girl,
    The widow being dead.

Alas, alack for rash resolves
    That men in haste oft make:
The widow lived and managed well
    Her daughter's place to take.

And now he 's gone to where, we 're told,
The good forever rest.
He owns a golden harp and crown
And wears a shining vest.

SEQUEL TO HIAWATHA.

All the things that Hiawatha
Did for good unto his people,
Did to teach his wand'ring kinsmen
Of the gifts that Nature gave them
And the magic power he wielded
'Gainst the demons strong and evil
Of the earth and air and water,
These have been by others told you
And I need not here repeat them.

But one dawn there came among t hem
One to all the tribes a stranger,
All the tribes of the Dakotas,
Bearing something in his right hand
They had never seen nor heard of.
It was larger than a pappoose
Of a dozen moons, and round it
Was a willow-woven basket.
Close and strong the willows bound it
So a blow could scarcely break it

On the dew-wet grass he set the
Strange, mysterious, ancient vessel
Where a knoll o'erlooked the village,
Pitched beside a stream that winding
Down from undiscovered sources
Eastward turned and leaped and bounded
Deer-like to the Mighty River.
All the wigwams looked to sunrise,
And their flaps were thrown wide open;
For the warm breath of the morning
Was with balmy fragrance laden,
With the mingled scents of flowers
Cov'ring all the summer's bosom.
And the rose-hue rising redder
'Bove the far-away horizon
Threw the gentle height so clearly
In relief against the day-break
That the stranger loomed above it
Like a giant to the people
As awakened from their slumbers
They astonished gazed and trembled.
Then they asked each other of him:
Who and whence he was they queried,
But the questions none could answer.

Not a syllable he uttered,
Did the stranger as he stood there;
But he bared his broad, low forehead

To the fingers of the morning
That with deft and playful touches
Tangled round his neck and shoulders
His long hair, unkempt and yellow,
Like a matted mass of cornsilks.
Not a word he spoke unto them
As he stood there and the sun rose.

But the warriors grew bolder
As he made no sound or movement,
And with cautious feet drew nearer.
They were followed by the striplings,
Who in turn led off the old men;
These the squaws and the pappooses,
With the children asking often
Troubled questions of their elders.
Thus the long procession filed out
Of the village toward the paleface
With the curious wicker vessel.
And they gathered there around him,
Looking calmly with his blue eyes
On the picturesque assemblage:
Standing like a graven statue,
Silent, motionless and rigid.
So he stood till they before him
All were come, as I have named them.
Then replacing on his forehead

And the yellow, tangled masses
Flowing down on neck and shoulders
The fur cap he 'd lifted from them,
Decked with tails of minks and foxes,
Spoke he to the wond'ring people
In the tongue of Hiawatha:
"Hear me, oh ye untamed children
"Of the prairie and the forest:
"Hear the message I have brought you,
"You whose fathers Hiawatha
"Taught in years that long are vanished—
"Hiawatha, their great teacher,
"He who sailed away and left them
"When the golden and the purple
"Lights lay on the Big Sea water.
"From the sun again descended
"As it rises on the east-land
"Like a mighty dandelion
"On its unseen stem upspringing,
"Bending westward low and lower
"Till it falls upon the mountains,
"He hath sent a gift unto you—"
But the old men interrupting
Smote their breasts and cried in chorus,
"O, our teacher, Hiawatha!"
Cried the young men and the striplings,
"The brave hunter, Hiawatha!"

And the squaws in lamentation,
"Send us back our Hiawatha!"
"While the children to their mothers
Clung and echoed, "Hiawatha."
Then again the stranger, saying
"Hearken to the things I tell you:
"I 'm the friend of Hiawatha,
"Come to bear his message to you
"With his gift of fire-water.
"This he sends and bids you drink it.
"It will make your feet feel lighter
"When the chase is long and weary;
"It will make your warriors braver
"When they meet the foe in battle;
"It will make your hearts beat gladder
"In the war-dance and the sun-dance;
"And 't will make your old men young men,
"And your squaws and children happy."

From the braves and all the young men,
From the squaws and all the old men,
From the striplings and the children,
Rose the loud acclaim of voices
Shrill, impatient, eager, calling
"O, thou friend of Hiawatha,
"Give to us the gift he 's sent us—
"Give to us this fire-water."

But he said, "It is not to you
"Free like air and land and river.
"Furs of beaver, robes of bison,
"Skins of deer, spoil of your chases,
"You must bring and lay before me:
"Then I 'll give you what he 's sent you."

So they heaped them up before him,
Heaped up loads for many ponies.
Whereupon he raised the vessel
To his lips and took a snifter
With a sigh of satisfaction.
Then he gave a swig to each one
Of the braves and to the old men
And the squaws; but to the children
Gave he none, because 't was empty.
But the demijohn he gave them
That they each might smell the nozzle.

And the friend of Hiawatha
Packed the ponies and departed
For his boat upon the river,
Leaving them to gather for him
Other loads to likewise barter
For the strong and fiery water,
For the corn-juice of the paleface,
That should prove their fiercest demon,
That should make their strong men children.

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